

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL 14 1/25/2011

1 agency to provide the training for the significant
2 changes in the law that will be imposed if this bill is
3 passed into law?

4 MS. MCGEEHAN: Well, after every session,
5 we have to change all our materials. And, you know,
6 maybe I can talk to our fiscal officer and maybe we'll
7 start putting in fiscal notes for these kinds of things,
8 but it has been our policy not to add a fiscal note for
9 something we're currently doing under state law and
10 funded for.

11 SEN. DAVIS: And so the change in
12 materials is all that would occur? If I'm an election
13 worker in the state of Texas and I'm facing some pretty
14 significant changes -- and I have to tell you I've read
15 this bill numerous times, and I'm still confused in
16 terms of what it would require of me as an election
17 worker. Is that the only costs that we assume will be
18 incurred, is the cost of the change of the material?
19 Isn't there some training -- active training that has to
20 occur to be able to make sure that the election workers
21 and the county administrators who are tasked with
22 carrying out this new law will understand exactly what's
23 expected of them in terms of its implementation?

24 MS. MCGEEHAN: We do -- we do, I think,
25 pretty extensive training right now. I mean, in an odd

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1 numbered year, we hold four seminars, and we have very
2 good attendance from our county election officials. So
3 I would be certain that our August county election
4 official seminar will be heavily -- if this passes will
5 heavily emphasize these new rules.

6 To go back to the federal funds, which we
7 know are limited, the grant for voter education also
8 includes election official training and poll worker
9 training. So if there are any remaining HAVA dollars in
10 that category that we don't use on voter education, we
11 could perhaps use to additional -- to develop additional
12 training materials.

13 SEN. DAVIS: Yes, and we talked about that
14 a moment ago, and you did state on the record that that
15 category of 5 to \$7 million that's remaining is the
16 entirety of the federal resource that you have available
17 to you right now, both for voter education and for
18 training purposes. And we've also talked about the fact
19 that the expectation and the demand on that particular
20 fund for public education is going to take the
21 significant balance that remains there. Correct?

22 MS. MCGEEHAN: Right. Well, just to be
23 clear, the remaining balance in the HAVA is all we have
24 for voter education, but there are some state funds -- I
25 don't think it's a lot -- but that would go towards

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1 updating handbooks and video and things likes that that
2 we normally produce as training materials.

3 SEN. DAVIS: When the Help America Vote
4 Act was implemented and in '06, as you said, that was
5 the first significant change that's been made or it's
6 the most recent significant change that's been made in
7 election laws in the state of Texas in terms of the
8 requirements of your agency and the training of your
9 agency, did the costs that your agency realize as a
10 result of the training component for HAVA increase as a
11 result of those new requirements?

12 MS. MCGEEHAN: We -- what we did do was
13 develop an online training component. So we used a
14 portion of the HAVA dollars to develop an online
15 training component, which was in addition to our other
16 training. I could get -- I don't know the cost of that,
17 but I could get you the cost.

18 SEN. DAVIS: It would be a helpful number
19 to have.

20 There's also a discussion in terms of the
21 fiscal note on this bill, including a coordinated voter
22 registration drive or other activities that would be
23 designed to expand voter registration. What would the
24 costs of such a registration drive be? It's on Page 2
25 of the fiscal note.

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1 MS. MCGEEHAN: Okay. I think that what
2 that is referring to is that at the end of Senate
3 Bill 14, there's a reference that says county voter
4 registrars can use Chapter 19 funds to defray costs in
5 conducting a voter registration drive. But I don't see
6 anything -- and I may have missed it -- but I don't see
7 anything in Senate Bill 14 that requires a voter
8 registration drive. I think it's -- what that section
9 in the bill is doing is trying to make clear that these
10 funds, which are -- go to county voter registrars to
11 enhance voter registration could be used to do voter
12 registration drives, but I don't see anything that
13 requires a voter registration drive in Senate Bill 14.

14 SEN. DAVIS: What resources currently are
15 expected of our local governments in carrying out the
16 training and the public awareness programs under our
17 election code.

18 MS. MCGEEHAN: The -- there's no state law
19 requirement to do voter education by the county
20 officials. Most of them do it as a public service
21 because they want to, but there's not a mandate under
22 state law to do that.

23 Under Senate Bill 14, there's required
24 training of poll workers on the new photo ID
25 requirements. And I may have missed part of your

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1 question.

2 SEN. DAVIS: And that required training is
3 to be done at the county level. It's expected that the
4 county will fulfill that requirement through their own
5 resources?

6 MS. MCGEEHAN: Well, they are required to
7 use the Secretary of State materials. I think that the
8 election code gives them discretion as to how they
9 implement it and how they conduct their training.

10 SEN. DAVIS: So it's foreseeable that at
11 the county level increased costs will be realized as a
12 consequence of the expectations of this bill?

13 MS. MCGEEHAN: Most counties conduct
14 training today. So they would just be incorporating
15 another component into their training program.
16 Depending on how they handled it would impact how
17 significant the fiscal impact would be in that county.

18 SEN. DAVIS: If I'm a voter today and I
19 want to go to the bill itself in terms of making sure I
20 understand what would be expected of me under today's
21 rules versus under the rules of the new bill, if I'm a
22 voter today and I come in to vote and I don't have my
23 voter registration card, instead I have an ID, I have a
24 state issued ID, I have a valid driver's license, and my
25 driver's license shows a different name than is

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1 currently on the roll because I've married or I've
2 divorced, how is that situation handled today?

3 MS. MCGEEHAN: State law doesn't directly
4 address it. So I think that as a practical matter
5 what's happening is the poll workers are making judgment
6 calls as they qualify those voters for voting.

7 SEN. DAVIS: But they are not being given
8 guidance or rules or requirements in terms of how they
9 are to deal with that situation today?

10 MS. MCGEEHAN: No.

11 SEN. DAVIS: It's within their discretion?

12 MS. MCGEEHAN: At this point. I mean,
13 state law is silent on it, and our office has not issued
14 any guidance on it. So we're hearing a lot about that
15 today. That's definitely something we'll probably need
16 to look into, but right now there is no rule or statute
17 on that issue.

18 SEN. DAVIS: Okay. And today if I go to
19 vote and my identification that I use for purposes of
20 voting has a different address on it than is listed on
21 the precinct roll, I think it's the interpretation today
22 under 2004 Secretary of State opinion that I am asked
23 for my correct address, and I am to be believed if I say
24 that my address is the address that's on the precinct
25 list as opposed to what might be on my ID?

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1 MS. MCGEEHAN: I think that's basically
2 correct. The purposes -- you know, showing ID today is
3 only for purposes of proving who you are. It's not to
4 prove where you live. So independent from the
5 requirement to show ID, either certificate or one of the
6 other authorized ID, there's a separate requirement in
7 the code where the election -- where the poll worker has
8 to ask every voter "Have you moved," so regardless of
9 what ID they show. And if they say yes, they've moved,
10 then they have to sign a statement of residence and
11 update their information. If they say no, they haven't,
12 they still live at the address on the list of registered
13 voters, then they are permitted to vote.

14 SEN. DAVIS: And what is your
15 understanding of whether -- how or whether that would
16 change under the requirements of the new bill if
17 everyone now is going to come in with a state-issued ID
18 or a driver's license? If the address on that ID does
19 not match the address that's on the voter file, how is
20 that to be handled going forward if this bill were to
21 pass into law?

22 MS. MCGEEHAN: My current understanding is
23 that that process wouldn't change, that the purpose of
24 SB 14 is, again, just to prove up ID, not prove where
25 you reside.

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1 SEN. DAVIS: And what steps would the
2 Secretary of State's Office engage in to assure that the
3 ID wasn't being used to establish an understanding of
4 the voter's residency?

5 MS. MCGEEHAN: Would definitely, I think,
6 be included in our training materials to emphasize that.

7 SEN. DAVIS: Currently, is there any
8 information that the Secretary of State's Office gathers
9 that breaks down by category voters in the state? And
10 when I say "by category," I mean by race, by gender, by
11 disability, by age.

12 MS. MCGEEHAN: We have some information.
13 We have -- we have age for sure. On gender -- we have
14 some information on gender, but it's not conclusive
15 because gender is now -- it used to be a required
16 element on the voter registration application. In 1995,
17 it was taken -- or it became optional after the National
18 Voter Registration Act. So we have some data on gender,
19 but, again, it's not complete.

20 Regarding ethnicity, we really -- we don't
21 have any information like that because it's not
22 collected when a person applies to register to vote.
23 The only data that we do have is we do have the number
24 of voters that have an Hispanic surname. And so we can
25 run the list of registered voters against this list of